

**METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR SUPPLYING ORBITAL SPACE
PLATFORMS USING PAYLOAD CANISTERS VIA INTERMEDIATE
ORBITAL RENDEZVOUS AND DOCKING**

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

In a space platform supply system, a canister containing supply for a space platform is launched into orbit using a launch vehicle. An intermediate space vehicle rendezvous and docks with the canister while the attached launch vehicle provides the necessary orbit maintenance and stabilization to enable the docking. After docking, the intermediate space vehicle detaches the canister from the launch vehicle element or the launch vehicle element may initiate detachment from the intermediate space vehicle/canister. In either event, the intermediate space vehicle then can provide propulsion and attitude control to allow the canister to be transported to and docked with the space platform being supplied, thus eliminating the need for the canister to include propulsion and attitude control of its own.